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THE HYMN OF CLEMENT AND THE ISIS LITANY

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THE HYMN OF CLEMENT AND THE ISIS LITANY

The subject for this study is suggested by the discovery at Oxyrhynchus, Egypt, in 1903 by Doctors Grenfell and Hunt of a long and interesting papyrus containing on the recto an invocation of the goddess Isis. It has been noted that this ancient litany bears certain peculiar similarities to "A Hymn To Christ the Savior", said to have been composed by Clement of Alexandria and attached to the end of his work "The Instructor" (*Παιδαγωγός*). It is the purpose of this study to compare in some detail these two compositions, together with certain other early Christian prayers and hymns, and determine, if possible, what light they throw upon the relation of Christianity to the religions of the ancient world.

Doctors Grenfell and Hunt, working through the Graeco-Roman Branch of the Egypt Exploration Fund, for the discovery and publication of remains of classical antiquity and early Christianity in Egypt, began their excavations in 1897 on the site of Oxyrhynchus, one of the chief cities of ancient Egypt, situated on the edge of the western desert one hundred twenty miles south of Cairo. Their first efforts were rewarded by the discovery of a very large collection of Greek papyri dating from the first to the seventh century of the Christian era, containing numerous theological and classical texts including a very interesting page from a book of Sayings of Jesus. In February, 1903, they returned

to Oxyrhynchus with a view to an exhaustive examination of what has been on the whole the richest site in Egypt for papyri, and further important discoveries were made. The work has been both long and costly, as the town is more than a mile in length, but their efforts have been abundantly rewarded.

It was in this second visit to Oxyrhynchus that this particular fragment of papyrus (Number 1380) which we have under consideration was discovered. It was published in Part XI of "The Oxyrhynchus Papyri" by Grenfell and Hunt in 1915. The invocation of the Goddess Isis is written on the recto and is dated near the beginning of the second century, A. D. On the verso of the fragment is a somewhat analogous composition in praise of Imhotep-Asclepius (Number 1381) and is also dated in the second century, though in the latter part of the century. The description as given by Grenfell and Hunt is something as follows:

"As often happens with a roll that has been re-used, the surface of the recto has suffered considerably, and the ink is in many places very faint, rendering decipherment difficult, particularly in the later part where lacunae are more frequent. The twelve consecutive columns, each containing 22-8 lines, are written in a small semiuncial hand with a tendency to cursive forms in certain letters, especially *a* and *ε*. *η* is remarkable for its tall first stroke. Stops, usually in the high position and all having

the same value, are common, and after one of these an initial letter is often enlarged. Diaereses are occasionally found, but no breathings or accents. Some corrections, chiefly due to misspellings of $\epsilon\iota$ for ι or vice versa, have been inserted in an apparently different but probably contemporary hand, though not regularly nor always intelligently, besides a few insertions by the scribe himself, who was not very accurate. The handwriting of both recto and verso indicates a date not later than the second century, the recto probably having been written in the reign of Trajan or Hadrian, the verso under the Antonines.

"The invocation falls into two sections, the first being concerned with the goddess in her well-known capacity of $\pi\omicron\lambda\upsilon\nu\nu\mu\omicron\varsigma$ and giving an elaborate list of her titles in towns or nomes of Egypt (ll. 1-76), and then in towns, districts, or countries in other parts of the world (ll. 76-119). The second section begins with a continuation of similar complimentary titles (ll. 119-42) still governed by $\epsilon\pi\iota\kappa\lambda\omicron\upsilon\mu\alpha\acute{\iota}\sigma\epsilon$, which no doubt occurred at the last beginning of the first section, and proceeds in ll. 142-298 to a long and somewhat disconnected prose hymn of praise addressed to the goddess, dealing with the various aspects of her divinity and power. Since the papyrus itself dates from near the beginning of the second century, the composition of the invocation can hardly be placed later than in the first--a date supported by the evidence of some

of the place-names, which suggest the period between Strabo and Ptolemy, contemporary with Pleny. It is obviously based on Egyptian documents ... But though the Egyptian elements are strongly marked both in the general arrangement and many of the individual expressions, the invocation was no doubt composed in Greek, as is shown by the identification of Isis with e.g. Hellas (l. 95), *φρόνησις* (l. 44), and many Greek or non-Egyptian deities, the introduction of the Dioscuri (l. 235), and the numerous parallels to Greek inscriptions and other evidence for Isis-worship in the eastern Mediterranean. As an important document written by an initiate, it ranks with the well-known inscriptions of Ios and Andros (C. I. G. xii. v, nos. 14 and 739), in which Isis speaks in the first person. When complete it must have been of considerable length, for the writing on the verso proceeds in the opposite direction to that on the recto, and while not much need not be lost at the end of 1380, since 1381, i, though not the actual beginning, is certainly not far from it, there is reason to think that many columns preceded 1380, i, for most of 1381 is the prelude to a narrative which only begins in l. 222 shortly before the papyrus breaks off. The list of Egyptian places which occupies 1360. 1-76 only covers the Delta, but the towns of Upper Egypt on the same scale would not have taken up more than three or four preceding columns, and what preceded these is unknown.

"Altogether the papyrus, in spite of its imperfect condition, supplies a fairly comprehensive and vivid picture



of Isis-worship in the first century when that Graeco-Egyptian cult had become a world-force. It is an intentionally archaic kind of composition, as is clear on comparison with 1381, which, though also a composition in praise of a Graeco-Egyptian deity and professing to be concerned primarily with the translation of a hieroglyphic roll, is much more Greek than Egyptian in character and style, illustrating the rapid decline of ancient Egyptian influences, even in matters of religion, under the Romans. The author of 1380 was no doubt a priest of Isis, possibly at Oxyrhynchus, where Isis had a separate temple, but more probably at Memphis, which is not only dignified by an unusual name in l. 2, and singled out in l. 249, but affords a connecting link with the text on the verso."

The Hymn of Clement known as "A Hymn to Christ the Savior" is the first of two hymns preserved at the end of Clement's second work the "Paedagogus", or Instructor. This work was written in the latter part of the second century for those who had been converted to Christianity and is a guide for the formation and development of Christian character, and for living a Christian life. He goes into considerable detail in his instructions for the proper conduct of Christians in every phase of life, and concludes with some suggestions, based on the words of Scripture, on prayer, civil government, and similar matters, finally ending the book with a prayer to the Paedagogus. There is some doubt as to whether or not the two hymns are really



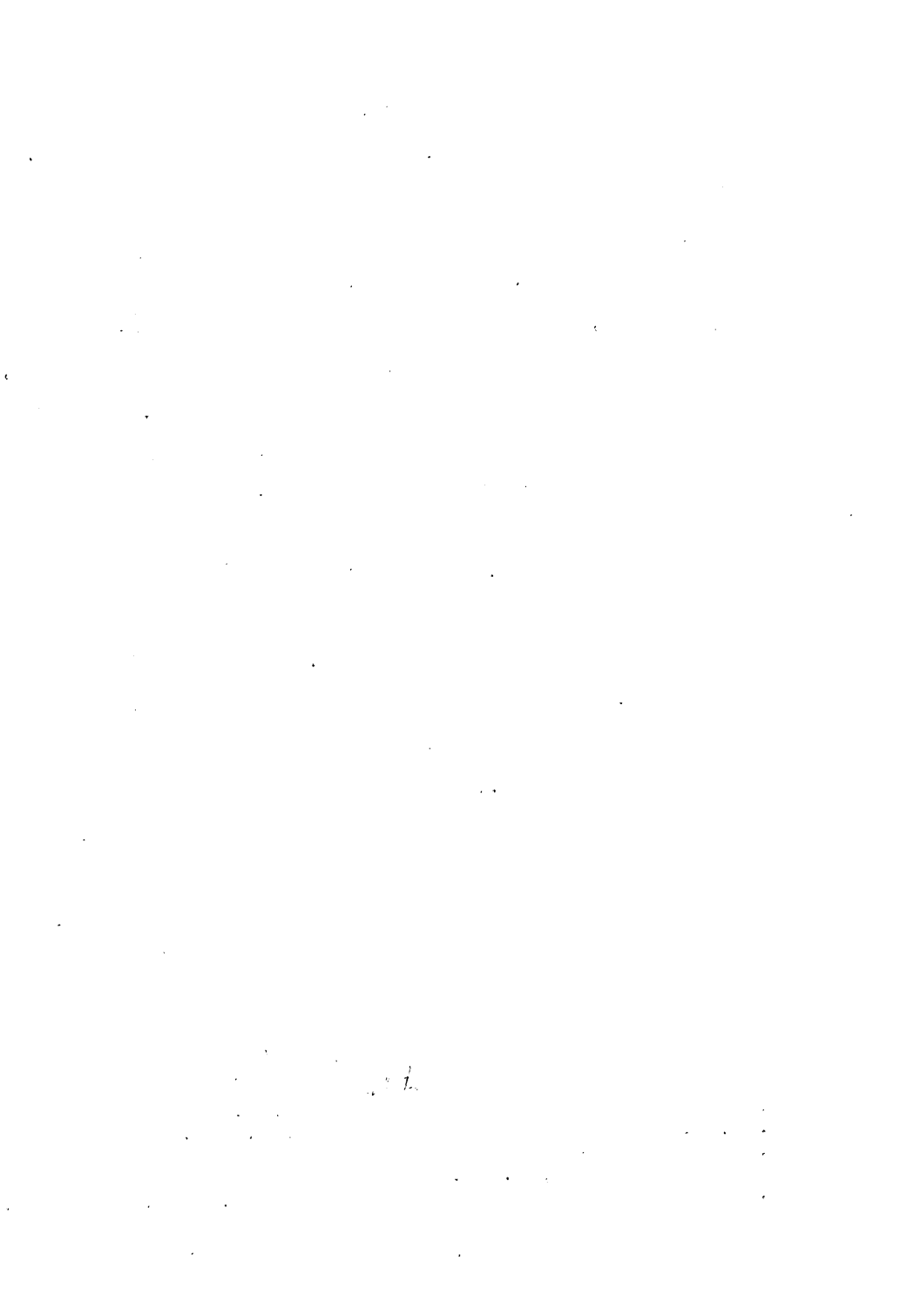
the work of Clement of Alexandria, or by another hand and were only attributed to him. The evidence is rather meager. Patrick¹ believes that the first may have been written by Clement, but that the second one "To the Paedagogus" certainly is not by him. Frederick W. Farrar² in speaking of the two hymns says, "They are interesting and beautiful, but probably belong to a later age." Earnest Leigh-Bennett³ says, "There were certain hymns usually bound up with St. Clement's works which may have been written by him, but were probably written by a follower and admirer of his. They have certain interests as characteristics of the time and as specimen of the earliest hymns". Stahlin⁴ in his text of the Protrepticus and Paedagogus of Clement includes the "Hymn to Christ", but not the hymn "To the Paedagogus", this being given only in his notes. He states that in the manuscript "P", a manuscript of the tenth century, now in the National Library of Paris (Paris, Graec., 415) and the principal authority for the text of the Protrepticus and of the Paedagogus, the last two pages of the Quire at the end of the Paedagogus are missing and are supposed to have contained the hymns. Copies of "P" known as "F" and "E" contain the Hymns with the title to the first as follows: *ὕμνος τοῦ σωτῆρος Χριστοῦ τοῦ ἁγίου Κλήμεντος*, which would indicate

1. John Patrick - Clement of Alexandria, p. 14.

2. F. W. Farrar - Lives of the Fathers, p. 173.

3. Ernest Leigh-Bennett - Handbook of the Early Christian Fathers, p. 87.

4. Otto Stahlin - Clemens Alexandrinus, Vol. I, pp. xvii, 291.



that Clement did not at least write the title, as he would hardly have referred to himself in that way. However the title may have very easily been added to an authentic hymn by a follower of Clement.

As the two hymns are of an entirely different character it is not likely that they were both written by the same person, and it is not impossible that Clement did write the "Hymn to Christ" for the use of his Christian followers, while the other was added to it in later times. There is scarcely anything in the "Hymn to Christ" which Clement could not have written, or that would conflict with what is said in his extant works. It might be objected that the conception of God is rather anthropomorphic and the product of a less mature and philosophical mind than that of Clement, though it is not greatly out of accord with his conception of the Instructor, who is "our Savior, the Incarnate Logos and leader of the Christians by love, ever showing justice and mercy." That Clement was familiar with the early emblem of the fish, which played so large a part in the symbolism of early Christianity, is shown in the *Paedagogus* iii, 11, where he says, "And let our seals be either a dove, or a fish, or a ship scudding before the wind, or a musical lyre, which Polycrates used, or a ship's anchor, which Seleucus got engraved as a device; and if there be one fishing, he will remember the apostle and the children drawn out of the water", All of which symbols are suggested in the Hymn to

Christ. A follower of Clement might have been familiar with all these ideas even ⁱⁿ Clement's own teachings. At any rate we have an indication as to the form of early Christian worship, and a representative of its stage of development.

As to the form of the Hymn to Christ and the Invocation of Isis the latter is much the longer, there being over three times the number of lines in the fragment than both the hymns in Clement combined, and it is impossible to determine how long it was originally. There is nothing in the Hymn to Christ corresponding to the extended list of places which occupies the first half of the Invocation of Isis, though omitting the various localities in the Isis litany the string of complimentary titles is very much the same. There are in both a list of the particular powers and qualities attributed to their god, with due praise and honor done to each. There is more repetition in the Isis litany due to her similar titles and the attributes attributed to her at the various places mentioned. It is also more elaborate and extensive in most of its details.

The diction of the two documents is no more alike than would be expected in two more or less contemporary writings of somewhat similar nature written in the same language. There are a few words common to both, but this in no more than would be expected. It is evident that there is no literary dependence of one upon the other, so far as verbal agreement goes. There is some similarity of ideas in

the two, and the general attitude of both to the deity is indeed strikingly the same. There are certain similarities in style which indicate about the same level of literary ability and much the same stage of religious development.

Below is given the invocation of Isis as translated by Grenfell and Hunt, and in a parallel column are included certain words and phrases of the Hymn to Christ which bear any relationship of sense or idea. Following this is given in full the literal translation of Wilson in the Ante-Nicene Christian Library, with all that has something corresponding in the Isis litany underlined. This will give a graphic representation of their points of agreement and difference.

Hymn to Christ

sure Helm of ships,

Shepherd of royal lambs,
Fount of Mercy,
perennial Word, immeasur-
able Age, Eternal Light,

Ruler of wisdom,
sure Helm of ships,
O holy King; Ruler of wis-
dom,

O holy King,
O King of saints, all sub-
duing Word of the most high
Father, Saviour of the

Invocation of Isis

...at Aphroditopolis One-...;
in the House of Hephaestus...,
..chmeunis;
who at...ophis art called
Eubastis,...;
at Letopolis Magna one, ...;
at Aphroditopolis in the Prosopite
nome fleet-commanding, many-shaped,
Aphrodite;
at Delta giver of favors;
at Calamisis gentle;
at Carene affectionate;
at Niciu immortal, giver;

at Hierasus...athroichis;
at Ptomemphis ruler;
at Psochemis bringer to harbour;
at Mylon ruler

at Ce..culemis...;
at Hermopolis of beautiful form,
sacred;
at Naucratis fatherless, joy,
saviour, almighty, most great;

	at Meniouis seated before Io in whose honour...is founded;
most high Father	at M..enestium most great, vulture-shaped, Aphrodite;
	at Taposiris Thauetis, Hera, giver;
all-subduing Word	in the Island swiftly-victorious;
	at Melais (?) many-formed;
Helm, Bridle	at Paucestis pilot;
the God of peace	at Menouphis warlike;
	in the Metelite nome Core;
	at Charax Athena;
	at Phinthine Hestia;
sure Helm of ships	at Pelusium bringer to harbour;
	in the Casian district Tachnepsis;
Saviour	at the Outlet Isis, preserver;
most high Father	in Arabia great, goddess;
	in the Island giver of victory in the sacred games;
	in Lycia Leto;
	at Myra in Lycia sage, freedom;
	at Cnidus dispeller of attack, discoverer;
	at Cyrene Isis;
	in Crete Dictynnis;
	at Chalcedon Themis;
the God of peace	at Rome warlike;
	in the Cyclades islands of three- fold nature, Artemis;
	at Patmos young,...;
O holy King	at Paphos hallowed, divine, gentle;
	in Chios marching;
	at Salamis observer;
	in Cyprus all bounteous;
O holy King	in Chalcedice holy;
	in Pieria youthful;
	in Asia worshiped at the three ways;
Saviour of the human race	at Petra saviour;
most high Father	at Hypsele most great;
	at Rhinocclura all-seeing;
	at Dora Friendship;
performer of virtue	at Stratonos Pyrgos Hellas, good;
	at Ascalon mightiest;
	at Sinope many-named;
	at Paphia mistress;
Support of sorrows	at Tripolis supporter;
	at Gaza abundant;
	at Delphi best, fairest;
	at Bambyce Atargatis;
	among the Thracians and in Delos many-named;
the God of peace	among the Amazons warlike;
	among the Indians Maia;

human race,	at Nithine in the Gynaecopolite nome Aphrodite;
Ruler of wisdom	at Pephremis Isis, ruler, lady of every country;
O holy King	at Es...Hera, divine;
Ruler of wisdom,	at ...;
all-subduing Word of the most high Father	at Buto skilled in calculation...;
rejoicest in the ages	at Thonis love...;
Ruler of wisdom	in the Saite nome victorious, Athena, nymph;
	at Nebeo...;
	at Caene joy;
	at Sais Hera, ruler, perfect;
	at Iseum Isis;
	at Sebennythus inventiveness, mistress, Hera, holy;
O holy King,	at Hermopolis Aphrodite, queen, holy;
Ruler of wisdom	at Diospolis Parva ruler;
	at Bubastus of old;
Support of sorrows	at Heliopolis Aphrodite;
	at AthribisMaia, supporter;
	at Hieria in the Phthemphuthite nome lotus-bearing;
O holy King	at Teouchis sacred, mistress;
	among the Bucoli Maia;
	at Xios of old, oracular;
	at Catabathmus providence;
Ruler of wisdom,	at Apis understanding;
pressed out of thy wisdom	at Leuce Acte Aphrodite, Mouchis, Esmerphus;
	at Phagroriopolis...;
all-subduing word of the most high Father	at Choatine victorious;
	at...skilled in writing,...;
	at Cynopolis in the Busirite nome Praxidice;
performer of virtue	at Busiris fortune, good;
	at Hermopolis in the Mendesian nome leader;
Christ the guide of children	at Pharbaethus of beautiful form
	at Isidium in the Sethroite nome
Saviour of the human race,	saviour of men;
Fisher of men who are saved	at Heracleopolis in the Sethroite nome mistress;
	at Phernouphis ruler of cities;
Ruler of wisdom	at Leontopolis serpent, good,
performer of virtue	at Tanis of gracious form, Hera;
	at Schedia inventiveness;
	at Heracleum lady of the sea;
	at Canopus leader of the muses
	at Menouthis truth;

O holy King

Ruler of wisdom

King of saints, Ruler of
wisdom
Christ the guide of child-
ren, Shepherd

Ruler of wisdom, of thy
wisdom

all-subduing

among the Thessalians moon;
among the Persians Latina;
among the Magi Core, Thapseusis;
at Susa Mania;
in Syrophoenicia goddess;
in Samothrace bull-faced;
at Pergamum mistress;
in pontus immaculate;
in Italy love of the gods;
in Samos sacred;
at the Hellespont mystic;
at Myndus divine;
in Bithynia Helen;
in Tenedos name of the sun;
in Caria Hecate;
in the Troad and at Dindyma...,
Palentra (?), unapproachable, Isis;
at Berytus Maia;
at Sidon Astarte;
at Ptolemais understanding;
at Susa in the district by the Red
Sea Sarkounis;
thou who also interpretest first
of all in the fifteen commandments,
ruler of the world;
guardian and guide, lady of the
mouths of seas and rivers;
skilled in writing and calculation,
understanding;
who bringest back the Nile over
every country;
the beautiful animal of all the
gods;
the glad face in Lethe;
the leader of the muses;
the many-eyed;
the comely goddess in Olympus;
Ornament of the female sex and
affectionate;
providing sweetness in assemblies;
the lock of hair (?) in festivals;
the prosperity of observers of
lucky days;
Harpocrates of the gods;
all-ruling in the processions of
the gods, enmity-hating;
true jewel of the wind and diadem
of life;
by whose command images and
animals of all the gods, having
...of thy name, are worshipped;

all-subduing
immeasurable Age

let us sing together simple
praises

that rejoiceest in the ages

O lady Isis, greatest of the gods,
first of names, Io Sothis;
thou rulest over the mid-air and
the immeasurable;
thou dividest the weaving of...;
it is also thy will that women
in health come to anchor with men;
all the elders at E...ctus sacri-
fice;
all the maidens who...at Heracleo-
polis turn (?) to thee and dedi-
cated the country to thee;
thou who art seen by those who
invoke thee faithfully;
from whom ...in virtue of the 365
combined days;
gentle and placable is the favour
of thy two ordinances;
thou bringest the sun from rising
unto setting, and all the gods
are glad;
at the rising of the stars the
people of the country worship
thee unceasingly and the other
sacred animals in the sanctuary
of Osiris, they become joyful
when they name thee;
the...spirits become thy subjects;
... (174-89) and thou bringest
decay on what thou wilt and to t
the destroyed bringest increase,
and thou purifiest all things;
every day thou didst appoint for
joy;
thou...having discovered all the
...of wine providedst it first
in the festivals of the gods...;
thou becamest the discoverer of
all things wet and dry and cold
(and hot) of which all things
are composed;
thou broughtest back alone thy
brother, piloting him safely and
burying him fittingly;
...(193-6) leader of the diadems ;
lady of increase and decay and
of...(202-17) thou didst estab-
lish shrines of Isis in all cities
for all time;
and didst deliver to all men obser-
vances and a perfect year;
and to all men...in every place;

thou didst show...in order that
 all men might know that thou...;
 thou didst establish thy son
 Horus Apollo everywhere the youth-
 ful lord of the whole world and
 ...for all time;
 thou didst make the power of
 women equal to that of men;
 and in the sanctuary thou didst
 ...nations...(222-31) thou, lady
 of the land, bringest the flood
 of rivers...; and in Egypt the
 Nile, in Tripolis the Eleutherus,
 in India the Ganges;
 owing to whom the whole and the
 ...exists through all rain, every
 spring, all dew and snow, and
 all...and land and sea;
 thou art also the mistress of
 all things for ever;
 ...(235-52) thou madest the...of
 the Dioscuri;
 ...thou hast dominion over winds
 and thunders and lightnings and
 snows;
 thou, the lady of war and rule,
 easily destroyest tyrants by trusty
 counsels;
 thou madest great Osiris immortal,
 and deliveredst to every country
 ...religious observances;
 likewise thou madest immortal
 Horus who showed himself a bene-
 factor...and good;
 thou art the lady of light and
 flames;
 thou...a sanctuary at Memphis;
 Horus having judged beforehand
 that thou hadst appointed him
 successor(of his father) ...
 enthroning him...(255-70) thou
 didst establish him lord of the
 throne and oracular king over his
 father's house for all time;
 in thy honour out of three temples
 that at Busiris called...

the God of peace
 all-subduing Word

Eternal Light

Bridle of untamed colts, Wing of unwandering birds,
sure Helm of babes, Shepherd of royal lambs, assemble thy
simple children to praise holily, to hymn guilelessly with
innocent mouths, Christ the guide of children. O King of
saints, all subduing Word of the most high Father, Ruler of
wisdom, Support of sorrows, that rejoicest in the ages,
Jesus, Saviour of the human race, Shepherd, Husbandman,
Helm, Bridle, Heavenly wing of the all-holy flock, Fisher
of men who are saved, catching the chaste fishes with sweet
life from the hateful wave of a sea of vices, --Guide (us),
Shepherd of rational sheep; guide unharmed children, O holy
King, O footsteps of Christ, O heavenly way, perennial Word
immeasurable Age, Eternal Light, Fount of Mercy, performer
of virtue; noble (is the) life of those who hymn God, O
Christ Jesus, heavenly milk of the sweet breasts of the
graces of the Bride, pressed out of Thy wisdom. Babes nourished
with tender mouths, filled with the dewy spirit of the rational
vap, let us sing together simple praises, true hymns to Christ
(our) King, holy fee for the teaching of life; let us sing
in simplicity the powerful Child. O choir of Peace, the Christ
begotten, O chaste people, let us sing together the God of
peace.

In this comparison we find that not only is the form of the two hymns much the same, but there is considerable agreement in the general ideas. This agreement does not extend to exact verbal agreement, but is only in the general conception of the attributes of God. Clement speaks in the Hymn to Christ of Christ as being the "Helm", "Bridle", "Wing", "the guide of children." Stahlin's Text of Clement has $\nu\eta\omega\nu$ instead of $\nu\eta\pi\acute{\iota}\omega\nu$ making it read "sure Helm of ships" rather than "of babes" according to Wilson's translation. Corresponding to this the Isis litany has references to Isis as "fleet-commanding", "bringer to harbour", "guardian and guide", suggesting guidance with imagery from sea faring life. Frazer² tells of the Virgin Mary being adored by tempest

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1. Wilson gives the following note: "Or, 'ships:' $\nu\eta\omega\nu$ instead of $\nu\eta\pi\acute{\iota}\omega\nu$, has been suggested as better sense and better metre.
 2. Frazer - Adonis Attis Osiris.



tossed sailors and of the beautiful epithet of "Stella Maris"- Star of the Seas, and suggests that this probably is the influence on Christianity of the worship of Isis as the goddess of the sea. The figure of the sea is also used in the Prayer to the Paedagogus which closes the third book of the Instructor, expressed in these words, "having sailed tranquilly over the billows of sin, may be wafted in calm by Thy Holy Spirit."

Isis is spoken of as being "gentle", "affectionate", "love" - terms attributed to Christ even today and implied in this hymn in "Shepherd of royal lambs", "Babes nourished with tender mouths," "Christ the guide of children". In eight places Isis is referred to as ruler, - "ruler of cities", "ruler of the world", and once "lady of war and rule". Clement has "Ruler of wisdom", "King" and "Guide", It would hardly have been natural in that age of Emperor worship, with the gods as rulers and rulers gods, that they should not have thought of their deity in terms of monarchy. Isis is twice "victorious" and "in the Island swiftly victorious", and "warlike". Christ is the "all subduing Word of the most high Father", and yet in contrast to the Invocation of Isis "the God of peace". Other attributes assigned to Isis are "immortal", "holy", "sacred", "most great", "divine", "Saviour of the world". similar to this we find in the Hymn to Christ "perennial Word", "immeasurable Age", "Eternal Light", "holy King", "most high Father", "Saviour of the human race". Isis is thought of as "skiller in writing and calculation, under-

standing", while Christ is "Ruler of wisdom". Isis is "good", Christ "performer of virtue". It is interesting to note that while Isis is generally supposed to be sorrowful in this she is the goddess of Joy, and this has its parallel in "Support of sorrows, that rejoicest in the ages".

Such an abundance of similarity, even of the thought content, in two such documents can not but suggest that there must have been some interdependence of the forces which produced them, and that they must have come out of the streams of life at the same stage of its development.

As to the differences in the two documents they are after all not so significant and fade away upon close examination. The Isis litany is a bit more anthropomorphic, concrete and naive, while the Hymn to Christ is more allegorical and spiritual, dealing with spiritual needs more than the physical. As was stated there is nothing corresponding to the catalog of localities in which Isis was worshiped, and the reference to the fish is a peculiar Christian symbol.

Of course we do not have any record as to the exact use of either of these hymns. Yet in our study of the worship of Isis and what we know of the worship services in the early Christian church it is easy to suppose that both served a very similar purpose. We are told that in the daily public worship of the Isis cult there were well defined rites of prayer, praise, sacrifice and adoration. Hymns, long litanies

enumerating the names of the gods, their attributes, manifestations and powers, were chanted.¹ This was the common practice of the Mystery cults, and it is inconceivable that Clement, as perfectly familiar as he was with Greek philosophy and all the contemporary thought and achievement, could have been ignorant of all these customs. And even though he might not have known this particular Invocation it is altogether probable that the author of the Hymn to Christ was modeling it after the liturgy of the Mystery cults, and it was doubtless intended to be sung or chanted in Christian gatherings of public worship.

In Acts 19: 34, we have a reference to this kind of practice in the Gentile world where Paul was carrying the Christian message, and he comes into conflict with the leaders of the pagan religion. The people are said to have rushed to the theatre and cried out for two hours "Great Artemis of the Ephesians". It is not to be supposed that they were shouting like a wild mob at a football game, but this was doubtless the keynote of a similar litany to Artemis which was started by someone and the crowd took it up, chanting in unison from memory. This was a popular way of arousing enthusiasm among the populace for the gods. Frazer says that much of the symbolism of the Catholic Church was due to the religious customs and practices of Ancient Egypt. The Isis cult was perhaps the highest and broadest type of the Mystery religions, and many of the converts to Christ-

ianity came from these cults. As a matter of fact they simply brought over into Christianity many of their former beliefs and practices, and this would naturally have its effect upon the church as a whole. Such similarities are more than a mere accident.

It is interesting to note that not only in the work of Clement do we find influence of this religious ceremony of which the Invocation of Isis gives us a good insight, but even in the New Testament itself we can find traces of its influence. In the Lord's Prayer, especially as it is given in the longer version in Matthew, there is a striking similarity in the general form of the prayer to that of this Isis litany. In this God is addressed as Father and is followed by a series of attributes and complimentary clauses and phrases. Of course it is much briefer in form, however. The style is also somewhat the same. It closes with a series of petitions, but who knows but what the lost end of this papyrus fragment contain in the lost ending petitions to the goddess for their safety and prosperity! One phrase of the Hymn to Christ might be translated as a petition for guidance. Did Jesus in giving a model prayer to his disciples form it after the prayers of the heathen religions? Or did it, after coming in contact with the Greek world, take on a form familiar to the people of that day?

That prayers and hymns were a common practice in the early church is a well known fact. These come to have a set form and are used liturgically very soon, as we have abundant evidence. In I Timothy 2: 1,2 the Christians are exhorted to make "supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings" for all men.

In the writings of the Apocryphal books of early Christianity there are a number of hymns and prayers upon which there is thrown considerable light by viewing them with regard to this Isis litany. All cannot be discussed at length, but it might be well to mention the invocation of the Holy Spirit, recorded in the "acts of Thomas", translated by E. R. James in "The Apocryphal New Testament" (page 376), in which the Holy Spirit is invoked as "power of the most high", "compassionate Mother", "communion of the male", "she that revealeth the hidden mysteries", "elder of the five members, mind, thought, reflection, consideration, reason". This sounds very much like the worship of some of the goddesses of the Greek religions.

Jesus, in the "Acts of John" (James, p. 253) is supposed to have sung an interesting hymn with his disciples on the occasion of the Last Supper. While of course not a genuine record, this tends to indicate what was taking place in the bounds of Christianity itself, and the influences that were coming in. "The Hymn of the Soul", sung by the

Apostle in prison recorded in the "Acts of Thomas" (James p. 411) is a narrative poem rather than an invocation, but is interesting in this connection. It is said to be of ancient composition, originally in Syriac. Thus our early Christian literature is filled with traces of this nature.

The discovery of this ancient papyrus gives not only an interesting picture of the worship of Isis in the first century, but furnishes an insight into early Christian worship and its relation to the world of religions among which it grew. Christianity was not an entirely new and foreign idea nor ideal in its early development, but was rather a cult brotherhood builded out of the experiences of the people, and made use of all of those elements about it that it could weave into its system of life and experience. We are not to be surprized that its early exponents and the "Father of Christian Literature" used many elements of paganism in their cultivation and propagation of the Christian faith, and that Christianity was more patterned after the Mystery cults than after the Jewish religion of which it was an outgrowth.

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